

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-15 /105 W
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R 031012Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4892

INFO AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT

SUBJECT: MCA OLD GUARD TO RETAIN CONTROL OF PARTY POSTS

REF: KUALA LUMPUR 3276

1. SUMMARY: MCA CENTRAL WORKING COMMITTEE MET AUG 2 TO SORT OUT CANDIDATES FOR LEADERSHIP POSTS PREPARATORY TO PARTY CONGRESS NEXT WEEK-END. INCUMBENT SLATE OF TAN SIEW SIN, PRESIDENT, LEE SAN CHOON, DEPUTY PRESIDENT, AND SIX VICE PRESIDENTS WILL BE RETURNED UNOPPOSED; HOWEVER, SIX OR SEVEN REFORMERS WILL COMPETE FOR PLACES ON 15-MAN CENTRAL COMMITTEE. ACCORDING TO MCA OFFICIAL, ABOUT 100 REFORM LEADERS HAVE BEEN EXPELLED AND THERE IS GOOD LIKELIHOOD THAT "YOUNG TURK" SUPPORTERS WILL SEEK DISRUPT NEXT WEEK'S MEETING. ALL INDICATIONS ARE THAT REFORM ELEMENTS HAVE VIRTUALLY NO CHANCE OF CAPTURING OR SUBSTANTIALLY INFLUENCING PARTY MACHINERY. END SUMMARY.

2. NEGRI SEMBILAN MCA CHAIRMAN WONG SENG CHOW GAVE EMBOFF DETAILS OF CENTRAL WORKING COMMITTEE MEETING AUG 2 AT WHICH LEADERSHIP SLATES WERE SORTED OUT. PARTY PRESIDENT TAN SIEW SIN WILL RUN UNOPPOSED AS WILL
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LEE SAN CHOON, INCUMBENT DEPUTY PRESIDENT; SIX VICE-

PRESIDENTS, ALL PRETTY MUCH OLD GUARDS, ARE LIKEWISE UNOPPOSED. IN ADDITION, THERE ARE 33 CANDIDATES-- AMONG THEM ONLY SIX OR SEVEN IDENTIFIABLE "YOUNG TURKS"-- FOR 15 CENTRAL COMMITTEE SEATS. REFORMER KINGTON LOO, PROMINENT KL ARCHITECT, MADE BID TO RUN AGAINST SIEW SIN BUT HIS PETITION WAS DISALLOWED BECAUSE HE HAD NOT BEEN MEMBER OF CNTRAL COMMITTEE FOR AT LEAST THREE YEARS AS REQUIRED BY PARTY CONSTITUTION. MICHAEL CHEN DID NOT CONTEST FOR LEE SAN CHOON'S SLOT AS HAD BEEN RUMORED; IN FACT HE DID NOT PRESENT HIMSELF FOR REELECTION TO CENTRAL COMMITTEE. UNDER PARTY RULES, LAST MINUTE CANDIDACIES ARE NOT ALLOWED UNLESS THERE IS MOVE TO AMEND CONSTITUTION IN ADVANCE OF ELECTIONS WHICH NORMALLY FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS.

3. IN CONTRAST TO REPORTS THAT FROM 200 TO 400 REFORMISTS, INCLUDING ENTIRE BRANCHES, HAVE BEEN EXPELLED FROM PARTY, WONG SAID THAT ONLY ABOUT 100 HAVE BEEN FORMALLY EXPELLED BY SIEW SIN OR CENTRAL WORKING COMMITTEE. IN WONG'S VIEW, THERE IS LIKELIHOOD THAT REFORMISTS WILL ATTEMPT DISRUPT NEXT WEEK-END'S MEETING IN BID TO DELAY ELECTIONS UNTIL OTHER MEANS OF OPPOSING OLD GUARD CAN BE FOUND.

4. COMMENT: ON FACE OF IT, OLD GUARD CLEARLY HAS UPPER HAND AND, AS LONG AS EXPULSIONS AND FORMING OF ELECTORAL SLATES HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT IN ACCORDANCE WITH PARTY CONSITUTION (WHICH IT APPEARS THEY HAVE), REFORMERS HAVE LITTLE CHANCE OF REDRESS. RE DISRUPTION OF PARTY CONGRESS, POLICE WILL BE CALLED UPON TO MAINTAIN ORDER, ALTHOUGH IT POSSIBLE LARGE DEMONSTRATION MAY FORCE POSTPONEMENT OF MEETING. LASTLY, MICHAEL CHEN'S WITHDRAWAL FROM CENTRAL COMMITTEE IS MOST SURPRISING DEVELOPMENT, ALMOST CERTAINLY DICTATED BY PM RAZAK WHO WISHES KEEP SIEW SIN FIRMLY IN SADDLE FOR TIME BEING. LYDMAN

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